



**Federal Aviation
Administration**

FOCUSFAA

It's All About You

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Horsing Around

The power of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita drastically changed

the lives of hundreds of thousands of people around the Gulf Coast, and even some who live thousands of miles away from ground zero.

Pamela Freni, a financial analyst in the ATO's Finance Services office, can attest to their power. A resident of Upper Marlboro, Md., Freni, an avid animal lover, could not turn her back on the pets and livestock struggling to survive in the wasteland.

The devastation to human beings is well documented. But the hurt wrought on animals is just beginning to be felt, said Freni. "People truly believe the Gulf Coast is over in terms of damage. It's just beginning. No one is moving back in. Volunteers are leaving. Mass starvation [of abandoned animals] is about to occur."



Pamela Freni recalls a life changing event.

Horsing Around

Freni initially traveled to the Gulf Coast shortly after the hurricanes to help care for rescued animals, taking a week of vacation and spending \$1,000 of her own money.

She and other volunteers worked 18 hours a day for five days to care for the creatures. "It potentially had life changing effects for me," she said, recalling "how dependent and how grateful they are" for human care.

When coworkers and friends heard about her trip, they donated money for animal care and towels for bedding. "My friends here at FAA are making sure I'm well supplied," she said.

Leaving behind the rescued animals at the end of the week was hard enough, but leaving non-rescued animals was "extraordinarily difficult."

When Freni returned to the Washington area, she turned to the Internet to stay connected with rescue efforts in the Gulf Coast. That's where

she discovered a plea from Lori Wilson, director of Rescue Ranch in Plaquemines Parish in Louisiana. Wilson was trying to save 60 starving horses and was soliciting help from around the country.

"I decided since I couldn't do anything hands-on, this was just a tailor-made opportunity to do something for animals like those I had grown up with," Freni said.

Freni grew up around horses on a ranch in Texas, as did her grandfather. The quest to help these horses reconnected her to her family. "The people that live in [Plaquemines Parish] are small farmers and ranchers," she explained. "It felt like it could have been my grandfather" who needed help.

Freni identified 100 hay farmers on the east coast and sent each a plea for



Lori Wilson leads a seriously injured horse from its stall.

Horsing Around

hay. One woman, Martha Vorhees in East Greenville, Pa., pledged 10,000 pounds of hay, enough to feed the horses for a month.

The first shipment arrived Jan. 27. Vorhees has promised another 10,000 pounds, but the transportation and fuel costs total about \$2,000 a trip. Freni isn't sure where the money is going to come from, but she insists they'll find a way.

Rescuers hope to sustain the horses through summer. At that point, they'll know whether growing conditions will be able to provide the horses and other grazing animals with the food they need. There are concerns that the salt-damaged fields that provide winter grazing and spring green grass will never return. "Things are going to become dire," predicted Freni. "We need to do something. Don't get tired of hearing one more Katrina story, because it's still desperate," she pleaded.

Freni also implores college students to consider foregoing their normal spring break activities and volunteer to help care for animals in the Gulf Coast.

As for Freni, she realized that her involvement with animals cannot end. "For the next several years, I will be positioning myself for my next career in animal care," she said. "We have to work so we don't have another Katrina or Rita where animals are left to fend for themselves." ✈

A Master Pilot

Donald McKay was the youngster in a group of pilots who recently received the Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award given to pilots who have been licensed for more than 50 years.

But it's hard to imagine his elders matching some of McKay's experiences in the cockpit, which include flying with Charles Lindbergh, surviving a hijacking, and flying everything from "flying boats" to the Boeing 747.

This past December, McKay, an operations inspector working out of the Air Tran Certificate Management Office (CMO) in

Orlando, Fla., was honored along with 25 other Florida pilots. Having just barely made the cut with 50 years as a licensed pilot, McKay quipped that it's remarkable that "I've survived this long." Some others in his class have been licensed for as many as 66 years.

McKay chanced into aviation as a young man. "I had never given any thought to flying. In 1954, I was trying to go to college. I didn't have enough money to make it work. Back then there were few scholarships, loans, nothing. [So] I went into the Navy." As it turned out, the Navy was looking for pilots. He was tested and determined to be a good candidate. McKay's aviation career was ready for takeoff.

McKay flew a dozen types of aircraft during his Navy stint. He served during the height



McKay receives his Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award.

of the Cold War, patrolling out of Bermuda as part of the U.S. Navy's effort to suppress Soviet submarine activity in the Atlantic Ocean. He also trained Navy pilots during his service.

After serving 10 years in the Navy, McKay went to work

A Master Pilot

for Pan Am Airlines in 1966, first as a navigator, then as a co-pilot. During his tenure, he had his share of memorable moments. On one occasion, his cockpit was visited by Charles Lindbergh, who was on a business trip to Europe. McKay described

Lindbergh as friendly, outgoing and congenial. "What impressed me most was that he had an amazing memory. He was able to recall precise dimensions and details of an old Curtis 'Mailwing' airplane that we had been talking about." Lindbergh was kind enough to give McKay an autograph, signing it as they flew over the Atlantic, the site of his fame.

It was at Pan Am that McKay experienced his most frightening



**Lt. Donald McKay
in the U.S. Naval
Reserves in 1962.**

episode in aviation. In 1970, after having operated charters in Africa, McKay was returning home as a passenger on a Pan Am 747. "I was simply riding as a dead heading crew. A group known as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine hijacked us to Beirut." McKay recalls the time he was on the ground in Beirut as the most dangerous. "There was a ring of terrorists around the plane, all armed [and] surrounding them was the Lebanese army. I felt if anyone aboard the aircraft caused any kind of disturbance both groups would

have fired wildly at the aircraft." After several hours, the plane took off again for Cairo, where the passengers were set free at the airport. McKay watched as the brand new 747 was blown up. Did the ordeal deter McKay from flying? "We got a week off, and then back to work," he said succinctly.

McKay joined the FAA in 1996 at Minneapolis, later transferring to the AirTran CMO. His duties include enroute cockpit inspections to observe AirTran's pilots using their policies and procedures. He credits his long



Don McKay was the last Pan Am pilot to fly this historic Boeing 747, the first of its kind flown by the airline.

A Master Pilot

and varied experience as a pilot to being able to do his job more effectively. "The experience I have is most valuable when you have to make a judgment. You rely on your experience, for instance, to help you determine when you see something that might possibly become unsafe."

His experience as a pilot, however, doesn't just assist him professionally, but also affects how he meets all of his responsibilities in life. "The way I look at life is how I flew airplanes. I am able to turn on and turn off priorities. When I went to fly my trips I didn't let outside things distract me from the job at hand. Do what you're doing until it's done."

Interestingly, McKay never cared to become a general

aviator. "I flew a 747, why would I mess around in a little airplane, like a Viper or a Cessna. I've always loved big airplanes, and may well have been the only Navy Cadet to ask to fly seaplanes instead of fighters!" he said.

McKay stresses the fundamentals of flying as being the key to success (see his tips at right). It's advice worth taking, because McKay's not just a pilot anymore. He's a Master Pilot. ✈

Being a Successful Pilot

Donald McKay offers up the following tips on safe flying.

- *Focus on what you're doing. Avoid distractions.*
- *Know your equipment. Know what it's capable of, and know its limits.*
- *Use the checklists.*
- *Maintain your sense of humor.*

War Against Nature

Ceremonies like the ones held Feb. 8 to honor employees' efforts during last year's hurricane season often focus



Ventris Gibson, assistant administrator for Human Resource Management, was on hand to honor employees at the Miami System Management Office for their work during the hurricane season.

on the insight and words of leadership, not necessarily of those who were there.

Focus FAA uses this space to focus on the employees ([click here](#) to see a list of honorees) and their perceptions during those crises. Jane Goodman, manager of internal communications, who accompanied Administrator Marion Blakey and other FAA officials to Mississippi and Louisiana to view the scene and to honor coworkers, filed this report.

The clear blue skies and mild temperatures seemed inconsistent with what we would see in the coming hours — thoughts of hurricanes a distant memory. The day was beautiful.

But on approach to Gulfport-Biloxi, the landscape beneath you starts to

War Against Nature



Administrator Blakey addresses honorees in New Orleans.

look different. Trees are bare and bent or broken off. There are countless blue-tarp roofs below. As we landed, the foliage reminds you that salt-laden winds lashed the whole area for days.

Ralph Humphrey, tower manager at Gulfport-Biloxi International Airport, and several employees greeted our party.

At the facility, we met with a group of employees who told us how changed their lives are from the storms — altered like the landscape, perhaps for a long time, perhaps forever. They detailed the hardships they overcame to get the facilities operational and take care of their families at the same time. As time has gone on, however, they are feeling forgotten now that media attention has shifted.

Administrator Blakey assured them: “Things will come back, slowly, as in other areas that have had devastation. We’re with you for the long haul.”

A tour of the beachfront (see video) serves as a grim reminder of the harshness of the water, storm, rain and wind. The coastline was devastated—miles of it whipped into rubble. Signs of normalcy gone awry: a bedspread hanging from a tree, a boat in a living room, mattresses hanging out of open-faced apartment buildings, an entire highway under sand.

From Gulfport-Biloxi, we went on to Baton Rouge Metropolitan Airport where Jay Ardillo, tower manager, met us. It was there we began to learn the Louisiana side of the story. We saw how the skin

[Click here to view a video tour.](#) The first part of the clip shows the general destruction in the New Orleans area, followed by the administrator’s visit to the damaged tower at Lakefront Airport in New Orleans. The last clip is a walk-through of a Lakefront hangar dotted with abandoned vehicles.

War Against Nature



Jeff Washington was among honorees at the Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center. On either side of him are Lindy Ritz, Aeronautical Center director, and Russ Chew, chief operating officer of the ATO.

had been ripped right off the tower's face — peeled away like an onion. We heard how our folks jumped into action and had things operating within 24 hours of the storm. We heard about countless heroic actions performed by our teams —tech ops technicians, controllers, even office managers who stayed for days and weeks on end.

"It was like being in a war game — but this was real — a war with nature," said one employee, a Vietnam veteran.

One witness described how controllers

worked 20 hours a day, catching sleep on air mattresses, under desks, on broken cots. "Anywhere and everywhere" said another.

"With entire towns under water, the airport was the only safe place really — the bad guys were standing right outside our fences — and our families were elsewhere, and we didn't have cell phone power to reach them," recalled one employee. "We had to be escorted by armed guards in and out of the facility — but mostly just in."

The ceremony took place at the Louis Armstrong International Airport in New Orleans. At the airport auditorium where the ceremony occurred, the sense of team pride permeated the event — and the

"The level of performance and sacrifice during those weeks, and still today, is incomparable."

— Nancy Kort
Area Director for
Central Terminal
Operations

War Against Nature

informal lunch we attended afterwards. While the ceremony had a distinguished air, there was the feeling that all in attendance are somehow a family, linked by a common past.

Later that day, FAA officials toured the stricken areas of New Orleans. The devastation around the affluent and not-so-affluent neighborhoods only served to heighten our pride in what our colleagues accomplished.

How our employees got to work, remained at their facilities under the worst conditions, selflessly left their families and personal possessions behind, worked day and night, and got the lifeline of aviation up and running so that others could be saved is an enormous story.

In the words of Nancy Kort, area director for Central Terminal Operations, “The level of performance and sacrifice during those weeks, and still today is incomparable.” ✈

The Ceremonies

Employees were recognized by top management officials at the following eight facilities. To view the photo gallery of events across the country, access <http://ato.faa.gov/ato/hurricane/index.html>.

- Miami SMO
- Louis Armstrong Airport Tower, New Orleans
- Houston Center
- Fort Worth Regional Office
- Atlanta Regional Office
- Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center
- Command Center, Herndon, Va.
- Headquarters, Washington, D.C.

From the wreckage of Hurricane Katrina,

multiple opportunities to educate have come about. Several FAA regions and centers have helped arrange the transfer of hurricane-damaged aircraft to aviation education programs run by school districts around the country.

The FAA's Aviation and Space Education (AVSED) program is working closely on the project with Build A Plane, a non-profit effort to provide high school aged students opportunities to restore or build airplanes. Build A Plane acquired 16 damaged aircraft after the hurricanes and was trying to find a way to donate them to school districts with aviation programs. That's when the AVSED program stepped in. It has long associated itself with schools and students through a variety of programs, especially its aviation career education camps, but this was the first time the agency could help in the donations of actual aircraft.



Julie Seltsam

The Southwest, Southern and New England Regions have been involved, as has the Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center. The William J. Hughes Technical Center is also trying to facilitate the transfer of a plane to a local school district.

As excited as the school kids are in getting hands-on experience with repairing or rebuilding a plane, the regional AVSED managers seem even more so. Julie Seltsam, the manager from the New England Region, has arranged the transfer of a damaged aircraft to East Greenwich High School in East Greenwich, R.I., which offers an aviation academy to students from across the state. "We put [our industry partners] together and magic happens," she said.

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"I'm originally from Rhode Island, so I'm very excited to give them this opportunity," Seltsam continued. "There was nothing like this when I went to high school."



Debra Myers

For Debra Myers, Southwest Region AVSED manager, the opportunity to help the South Fort Worth school district acquire its Beech B-55 has been a personal coup. "You keep working and working and when you see people getting more excited about [aviation education], I say, 'Hey, we're seeing real things happen.'"

The region has been supporting aviation education since the early 1990s. Two years ago, it rounded up 20 excess laptop computers to donate to Dunbar High School in Ft. Worth so its engineering and science special interest students could participate in a science competition.

"I think the Ft. Worth/Dallas area has reached the tipping point in aviation education," Myers said. "We've created our own little aviation education epidemic here."

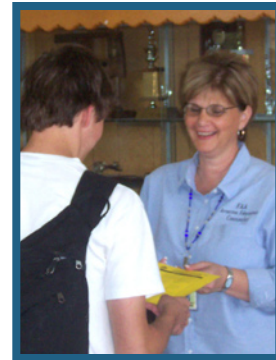
Melissa Graffigna has been the Aeronautical Center's AVSED manager for just under a year, but her excitement at helping a local aviation academy acquire a Piper Navajo Chieftain is palpable.

It also reinforces the center's decision to focus more on high school juniors and seniors, and less on elementary school students. Because of the enormous amount of time needed to deal with student groups, Graffigna and her staff decided to focus on schools that teach students about job potential in the aviation sector.

Graffigna called the director of the Metro-Tech Aviation Career Campus, which is located on Aeronautical Center property. "We have a really good relationship," she said. "I asked him if he was interested. His immediate response was, 'I'll take all 16 aircraft.'"

Metro-Tech will use the aircraft to train airframe and powerplant mechanics. Graffigna is now trying to procure a second aircraft for another Metro-Tech location in Oklahoma.

"There's a lot of great potential for us to make an impact on future FAA and industry employees," she said. ✈️



Melissa Graffigna

Who's Your Friend?

You have to wonder sometimes if Tech Ops technicians feel like they're swimming upstream against a strong current.

They are constantly busy maintaining the thousands of pieces of equipment critical to the National Airspace System (NAS), and their workload is even more strenuous now due to shortages in the workforce. Attempts to communicate with these technicians can be difficult because oftentimes they are out in the field doing their jobs.

The FAA Logistics Center, which has a responsibility to better serve its customers, recognizes this fact and has set into place several initiatives designed to better serve the field.

The Logistics Center has always been very closely tied to the field as it distributes parts and provides repairs for failed parts and test

equipment. Ed Andrews, assistant division manager for the Product Services Division, said, "we have always had a good working relationship with the field techs, but we need to do more to help them."

Product Services repairs power supplies and transformers, builds and installs fiber optic and



Jerry Herring and Larry Atkins of the fiber optics and cable branch at the Logistics Center install new cables on a NAS radar.

Who's Your Friend?



Tim Hogan of the metal technologies branch manufactures a sheet metal modification for a cabinet.

copper cables, and can modify and fabricate most any part for systems managed by the other Logistics Center product divisions. In addition, it manages the repair and calibration of test equipment. Andrews noted Product Services has a problem in that a lot of the “legacy” equipment in the field is very old, worn out, obsolete, and hard to get parts for.

“We get a lot of items returned under warranty that the techs say have failed,” said Andrews. “One of the initiatives we have set up is to test each item that comes in on a customer service action (CSA) to determine if it is unserviceable. We take that part and put it into a test bed that simulates an operational system to determine its serviceability. If it tests bad, we troubleshoot to find the failed parts and repair it. If it tests serviceable, we put it back into stock.”

To date, 36 percent of the items returned as failed are testing serviceable. When

this happens the Logistics Center sometimes needs to talk to the technician in the field about the failed item. It also has set up a “Tech to Tech” process in which a field technician may check a box on the CSA requesting to speak with a Logistics Center technician about a part.

Another Logistics Center initiative is appointing a customer service representative for each service area. The field can call these representatives on any issue concerning parts, shipping/tracking information, and other information. Bonnie Hall, the customer service representative for the Central Service Area, sees her job



Bonnie Hall

Who's Your Friend?



Paul Killman of the metal technologies branch machines a new part for a NAS legacy system.

as twofold. First, she communicates daily with the SMO and SSC managers about what parts are on order and addresses issues on shipping and tracking of parts. Second, she answers field tech questions about the cost of a part, delivery time, and communications with inventory managers.

Another part of the representative's job is to educate the field on the

Logistics Center's Franchise Fund. Many FAA employees do not understand why parts are no longer "free issues." The Franchise Fund is a business concept in which the appropriations the center used to get were allocated to the service areas instead. Franchise Fund legislation requires that the Logistics Center re-coup 100 percent of its costs, including wages and benefits, operating expenses, and acquisition dollars.

"The Logistics Center continually researches and conducts studies on best industry practices, pricing strategies, and a multitude of other things to ensure that we are competitive with industry," said Hall.

Contrary to popular belief, the Logistics Center is not allowed to make a 'profit.' If it can provide a cost savings to the FAA, it is allowed to keep a very small percentage of the retained earnings, but it must be used to provide employee training, buy equipment, upgrade equipment, and infrastructure upgrades that are not currently funded. "We need to do a better job of communicating this to the field," Hall added.

Tammy Robertson is trying to do the same type of communicating in the "AML Signal" newsletter launched last May. The goal of the newsletter is twofold. "First to inform the field about



Tammy Robertson

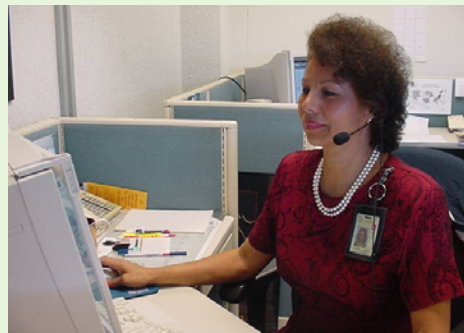
Who's Your Friend?

technical updates, proven tips for performing tests, proper procedures for installing parts, ordering parts, or returning items for credit,” Robertson explained. “Second, and most important, is to open up lines of communications between the field and the Logistics Center, encourage feedback from the field, and let them know that we are trying to make this system more cost effective and efficient for them,” she added. To subscribe to AML Signal, email 9-AMC-AML-NEWS or call the Customer Care Center (see box at right).

Other initiatives are planned that will enhance the ability of the Logistics Center and the field to become more cost effective and efficient.



FAA Logistics Center Customer Care Center



Joyce Vaughn at the Customer Care Center.

The Customer Care Center is an around-the-clock facility dedicated to highly responsive support to NAS equipment and personnel. Center employees provide assistance in placing requisitions, performing part number research, arranging warranty replacement of defective parts and coordinating expedited shipment of critical assets. The center ensures continuity in communication between customers and Logistics Center personnel after normal duty hours, on weekends and holidays.

Tech Ops employees can reach a Care Center agent at:

FTS & Commercial: (405) 954-3793

Other than FTS: 1-888-322-9824

FAX: (405) 954-4136

Your Two Cents



Congratulations to Lori Lehnert from Headquarters for predicting the winner of the Super Bowl and coming closest to the score. Lori picked the Steelers to

win 23-13, off by only a total of five points. A close second was Katherine Devore, also from Headquarters, who picked the Steelers to win 21-17. She was off by one Seattle touchdown. Fans of both sides acquitted themselves admirably in their dedication and enthusiasm to their teams.

Out of 25 responses, 12 predicted a Seahawks win and 11 went for the Steelers. No one picked Hines Ward as the MVP, but we'll acknowledge Christine Dalena from Great Lakes who said she would wear her Hines Ward jersey during the game. Thanks to all who participated.

Now, on to more pressing matters: who will win the Oscars? We're interested in your pick for Best Movie, and Best Actor and Actress. As a reminder, the nominations for best movie are "Brokeback Mountain," "Capote," "Crash," "Good Night, and Good Luck"



and "Munich." Best leading actor nominations are Philip Seymour Hoffman for "Capote"; Terrence Howard, "Hustle & Flow"; Heath Ledger, "Brokeback Mountain"; Joaquin Phoenix, "Walk The Line"; and David Strathairn, "Good Night, and Good Luck." Best leading actress nominations went to Judi Dench, "Mrs. Henderson Presents"; Felicity Huffman, "Transamerica"; Keira Knightley, "Pride & Prejudice"; Charlize Theron, "North Country"; and Reese Witherspoon, "Walk the Line."

Email your cinematic predictions to jim.tise@faa.gov.

Super Bowl Predictions

Top 10 List

The 10 things the Seahawks are going to do:

10. Stop the Steeler running game.
9. Get the first score.
8. Establish Ford Field as OUR HOUSE.
7. Blow the Steeler socks off.
6. Prove to the media we're Number One.
5. Have the 12th man screaming "VICTORY!"
4. Have the Mayor declare the following Monday Seahawk day where everyone gets the day off!



Your Two Cents

(Okay, I'm dreaming).

3. Savor every second before and after winning!
2. Stay healthy for another three years of Super Bowl!

And the number one thing the Seahawks are going to do is...

1. BE THE 2006 SUPERBOWL CHAMPIONS!!!

(FYI - my brother works with the Seahawk staff and gets to go with the team! How cool is that?)

Cindy K. Furukawa

Northwest Mountain Region

Dream Game

I had a vivid dream two nights ago that I was watching the Super Bowl and there was no scoring for almost all of the first half until the end. The first score before halftime was by Seattle. Roethlisberger fumbled in his own end zone and recovered for a safety. The next score was also by Seattle. Pittsburgh got the ball back but Roethlisberger threw an interception for a touchdown. The score at halftime was Seattle 9, Pittsburgh 0. I don't know how much credence you can put into a dream about the Super Bowl. But I think that Seattle is getting no respect and everyone thinks Pittsburgh is going to walk away with it. A team becomes very dangerous when

they don't get respect. I think this game will be close but Seattle comes out the victor. Seattle 26 - Pittsburgh 24. I think Sean Alexander will get the MVP for the game.

Tom Wilkinson

Eastern Region

Enter The Bus

The Steelers have the ball on their own 21-yard line with 1:04 remaining on the clock. Seattle is winning 29-25. The Steelers march down to Seattle's 6-yard line with 25 seconds remaining in the game. Big Ben throws a screen pass to Jerome Bettis and the Bus rolls into the end zone for the game winning touchdown! The Steelers win 32-29. Jerome Bettis is named the Super Bowl MVP.

James Schneider

Great Lakes Region

Super Bowl Hype

A team will win by at least one point.
A team will lose by at least one point.
Most will lose in their betting pool.
A few will win and think it's cool.
Many will gain a few pounds from eating the vittles.

Your Two Cents

A few will lose their voices from shouting at officials. Except for the commercials, some of us could care less. And even those will be discussed by the press.

Virginia P. Volk
Headquarters

Seattle Will Shut Down Steelers' Running Attack

This will be a good game, but Seahawks bring the championship back to Seattle. The score will be Seattle 27 - Pittsburgh 20. The MVP will be Matt Hasselbeck and we will take the final lead of the game with three minutes left. The defense will hold the Steelers to less than 100 yards rushing.

Rodney Lindbeck
Northwest Mountain Region

One For The Thumb

I predict Coach Cowher and the team will get that "One for the Thumb" this year. Although I won't be in PIT or DTW for the big game I will be proudly wearing my Hines Ward jersey with my terrible towel in hand! Pittsburgh 28 - Seattle 24; MVP: Troy Polamalu.

Christine Dalena
Great Lakes Region

Correcting Media Hype

I cannot understand why anyone would be in doubt as to the most probable outcome of the Super Bowl this year. However, in an effort to provide us with an objective analysis, completely free from all the media "hype," please consider the following:

- The Seahawks have "Alexander the Great!"
 - The Steelers have white jerseys.
 - The Seahawks fly with the FAA-authorized call sign of "Seahawk One."
 - The Steelers are still taking the "Bus."
 - The Seahawks are from the "Emerald City."
 - The Steelers are from PITsburgh.
 - After the game, the Seahawks will proudly return to Seattle, Wash.
 - Sadly enough, the Steelers will return to Pittsburgh.
- Based on the above, the final score prediction is: Seahawks 24 - Steelers 17

Sandy Detherage
Northwest Mountain Region

Steelers On A Roll

Pittsburgh 24 - Seattle 20. Should be a great game but the Steelers are on a roll and will win this Super Bowl for retiring Notre Dame alum

Your Two Cents

Jerome Bettis. The "Bus" will contribute to the win, but big Ben Roethlisberger will be the MVP.

Mark Adams
Headquarters

Waste Of Taxpayers' Dollars

I am shocked that an agency who claims to not have enough funding is spending taxpayers' dollars on employees' salaries to participate in non-work related Super Bowl activities. Congress will love this!

Cynthia Dicarlo
Headquarters

Polamalu Fan

Steelers 21- Seattle 17. MVP will be Troy Polamalu. I think he'll have an amazing game and Dick LeBeau's defense will contain Shaun Alexander.

Katherine Devore
Headquarters

Alexander the Great

We all know that Shaun Alexander loves an audience. He'll have it on Sunday and he is going to perform. I think it is going to be a close, well fought game, but Seahawks will prevail. Seattle

24 – Pittsburgh 17. Whatever the outcome, the Hawks deserved this trip to the big dance!

Jennifer Campa
Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center

Terrible Towel


No doubt that the Steelers will win! They had to beat the odds to get to Detroit, and plan to leave there with a victory for the "Bus." I have my 1970s Terrible Towel hanging from my mantle for good luck. Pittsburgh 23 – Seattle 13. ✈

Lori Lehnerd
Headquarters



Employees at the Seattle Consolidated Office Building show their true colors a few days before the Super Bowl.

Now This



Growing up, space was the place where Captain Kirk duked it out with the Klingons. When man landed on the moon, I was too tired to stay up and watch. Space was old hat. Been there. Done that. I didn't like Tang, either.

Space was a place we'd always been, and — as far as I could tell — a place we'd always be. When the pictures from the moon came flickering back, and they were in black and white, I was unimpressed.

Things are different now.

At the FAA's Commercial Space Transportation forecast conference held last week, Secretary Mineta and Administrator Blakey opened the event with some surprising words...surprising even for a guy like me, a guy for whom space was old hat. Been there. Done that.



Mineta told the crowd of about 250 that he expects to issue permits for test flights by next year. Licenses for passenger travel won't be far behind.

Marion Blakey was equally optimistic. "You know, SpaceShipOne is on display in the Smithsonian, right alongside Apollo 11 and Friendship 7, and Burt Rutan's other airplane. But what I want to see, what the people in

Now This

this room want to see, is a consistent, reliable form of travel that's not just a joyride for the wealthy. What I want to see is a postcard . . . written by a private citizen . . . and mailed from the space station."

That's the kind of enthusiasm that has people signing up to buy tickets for flights that don't yet exist. People want that zero-G experience, and they're willing to pay thousands of dollars and travel 62 miles straight up just to get it.

Richard Branson is already talking about a *spaceline*. Aviation's early days had barnstormers. Commercial space has *astropreneurs*. I read a while ago about somebody studying the effects of zero gravity on carbonated beverages. A spaceline, you know, with 7UP. . . way, way up.

All of this to-do about Burt Rutan and Paul Allen and Mike Melvill is great fodder for people who've dreamed about being in space, except they lacked the undergraduate degree from the Air Force Academy, the

master's from Purdue and the Ph.D. from Stanford. Rutan, Allen, Melvill and Branson are going to give the common man an entrée into space, and the ticket — within time — isn't going to cost a king's ransom.

The administrator concluded her remarks with another observation that's worth repeating. "As you know, NASA is dropping the shuttle as of 2010," she said. "One of you is pushing to find a way, a cheaper, better, faster way to get the job done. That's what this forecast conference is all about. And the forecast, from where I stand, is clear with unlimited visibility."

She's right. So is the Secretary. The market is there, and there are astropreneurs chomping at the bit to see it firsthand. ✈

Anthony Willett

Willett is a member of FAA's Office of Communications.

FAA Digest

Note: While Jerry Lavey is on leave, FAA Digest will replace AOA Highlights.

General Counsel Steinberg Nominated for Department Post:

President Bush intends to nominate Andrew B. Steinberg to be Assistant Secretary of Transportation for Aviation and International Affairs. Mr. Steinberg currently serves as our Chief Counsel. The Feb. 10 nomination represents just the beginning of the confirmation process.

Above and Beyond Awards

Bestowed: On Feb. 8, ceremonies were held at eight locations to honor those employees who went above and beyond the call of duty during hurricane relief efforts. Administrator Blakey lead a ceremony in New Orleans after touring facilities in Gulfport-Biloxi, Baton Rouge and New Orleans. Members of the leadership team attended ceremonies at seven other

locations. The employees honored “maintained the lifeline of aviation” during one of the nation’s largest natural disasters.

Is History Repeating Itself?: The Wall Street Journal thinks so. They published an editorial entitled “PATCO Revisited” on Feb. 6, 2006, taking a hard line on what it called the union’s “excessive demands.” FAA agreed to a mediator’s request for a media “blackout” that was rejected by the union.

Budget Request Awaits

Congressional Approval: Driven by our 5-year Flight Plan, the FY 2007 budget proposes \$13.7 Billion to improve aviation safety, expand capacity, and improve global aviation. The request, which awaits Congressional approval, is 3.9 percent — or \$562 million — less than the FY 2006 enacted budget.

Funding Proposal Expected

This Spring: *Aviation Daily* reports Administrator Blakey commenting that a legislative

proposal for reforming FAA’s funding mechanisms will be completed by DOT this spring. The 10-year proposal is expected to be sent to Capitol Hill by March or April and will be followed by another proposal for a 4-year reauthorization. The reauthorization proposal will focus more on FAA’s programs than on financing.

Threat Prompts Crisis Plans: “The FAA’s crisis response steering group for pandemic influenza convened to formulate FAA policy in the event of a pandemic influenza outbreak in the United States and internationally. This effort parallels those being developed at the Departments of Transportation and Homeland Security. All levels of the federal government are preparing for a potential crisis.” ✈

FAA Digest is compiled by Jane Goodman, Internal Communications